DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 306 607 CS 506 580

AUTHOR Bullis, Connie; Bach, Betsy Wackernagel
TITLE Socialization Turning Points: An Examination of Change in Organizational Identification.
SPONS AGENCY Utah Univ., Salt Lake City.
PUB DATE Feb 89
NOTE 38p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Western Speech Communication Association (Spokane, WA, February 17-21, 1989). Portions of this paper were presented at the Annual Meeting of the Speech Communication Association (72nd, Chicago, IL, November 13-16, 1986).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Attitude Change; Communication Research; Graduate Students; Higher Education; *Identification (Psychology); Interviews; Organizational Communication; *Socialization; *Student College Relationship
IDENTIFIERS Organizational Culture; Organizational Research; *Turning Point Analysis

ABSTRACT

To examine perspectives of change in individual-organizational socialization, a study used the retrospective interview technique (RIT) to reconstruct the history and process of individuals' socialization experiences over an 8-month period. Using the RIT, researchers asked subjects, 28 entering graduate students enrolled in three communication departments, to identify and plot all turning points in their departmental relationships since first meeting their relational partners. Two interviews were conducted with each participant, the first approximately 4 months after the beginning of the academic year, and the second approximately 4 months after the first interview. Both interviews were identical and focused on turning points which occurred during the 4 months preceding the interview. Participants plotted and explained their identification levels at the time of the interviews and at the beginning of the 4-month period, then plotted points in between, when identification increased or decreased. As each point was identified and plotted, interviewers probed for details regarding the change in identification. Level of identification with the academic department was assessed with a shortened version of the Organizational Identification Questionnaire (OIQ). Results revealed 15 turning point types including: moving in; settling in; socializing; sense of community; receiving informal recognition; gaining formal recognition; jumping informal hurdles; representing the organization; and alienation. Results indicated that several turning point types were associated with immediate change in organizational identification while others were associated with levels of identification at the end of the 8-month period. (MM)

ED306607

Socialization Turning Points: An Examination of Change In Organizational Identification

(Forthcoming in the Western Journal of Speech Communication)
6/89

Connie Bullis
Department of Communication
University of Utah
Salt Lake City, UT 84112
(801) 581-6888

Betsy Wackernagel Bach
Department of Interpersonal Communication
University of Montana
Missoula, MT 59812
(406) 243-4293

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Betsy Bach
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

This research was supported by a grant from the University of Utah. The authors express appreciation to Kim Wells for her help with data collection.
Portions of this paper were presented at the annual meeting of the Speech Communication Association, Chicago, 1986.

CS506580

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Abstract

This report introduces a common gap between theory and extant research which plagues two areas of organizational inquiry, describes a method through which these concerns may be addressed, and describes a study which employed this method. Specifically, recent conceptualizations of organizational socialization and organizational identification view individuals as active participants in their relationships with organizations. Research in both areas has over-emphasized the organization's perspective and under-emphasized the individual's perspective. Turning point analysis is a method through which researchers may "listen" to participants' points of view. It was used in a study reported here in order to help round out the relevant bodies of research. The retrospective interview technique was used to reconstruct the history and process of individuals' socialization experiences over an eight-month period. Fifteen types of turning points were identified. The results derived from turning point analysis are compared with conceptualizations of socialization and identification. Similarities and differences are noted. Some turning point types are consistent with extant work while others are not. Several turning point types were associated with immediate change in organizational identification while others were associated with levels of identification at the end of the eight month period. Implications are discussed.

Researchers have recently examined a wide variety of topics in the study of organizational socialization (Cheney, 1987a; Falcione & Wilson, 1988; Feldman, 1988; Jablin, 1987; Kreps, 1983; Reichers, 1987; Stohl, 1986). Yet in elaborating the development of relationships between individuals and organizations, one fundamental dimension along which the process takes place, identification (Burke, 1950; Tompkins, Fisher, Infante & Tompkins, 1975; Tompkins & Cheney, 1985), has typically been ignored by researchers. In this report, we explain the need to study identification during organizational socialization, offer turning point analysis as a method for examining change during the process, and report results from an initial study.

Socialization

Three trends have emerged in the ways in which scholars conceptualize organizational socialization. First, conceptualizations have increasingly attributed active participation on the part of organizational newcomers. Historically, organizational socialization scholarship suffered from importing anthropological assumptions. Newcomers to organizations were cast as infant members of societies. For example, Buchanan (1975) discussed the need to understand the processes by which "committed managers are molded" and noted . . . "the fact that new managers are tabula rasa insofar as the organization is concerned" (pp. 534-535). As the sociological distinction between primary (i.e., infants in societies) and secondary (i.e., adults in organizations within societies) socialization was adopted, approaches to organizational socialization attributed more bi-directionality to the individual-organizational relationship. For example, Jablin (1982) adopted the term "assimilation" to incorporate socialization and individualization as reciprocal processes through which

organizations and individuals develop relationships. Individuals were cast in the role of actively learning the values, norms and behaviors required of them to take on organizational roles (Brim, 1966; Brown, 1985; Darling, 1986; Jablin & Krone, 1987; Louis, 1980). For example, Wilson (1986) and Darling (1986) call for the study of communication strategies through which individuals reduce uncertainty and acquire the relevant information needed to take on their organizational roles. Yet, as Jablin (1984) observed, "most organizational assimilation research has focused on the process from the organization's perspective" (p. 596). Research examining the individual's perspective is needed.

Second, scholars have often adopted stage models as ways of conceptualizing the socialization process as it takes place over time (Feldman, 1976; Schein, 1971; Van Maanen, 1975). Models incorporate from three (Van Maanen, 1975) to six (Wilson, 1984) stages through which the organizational socialization process moves. Researchers typically assume that through a series of stages, individuals are transformed from "outsiders" into functioning "insiders" or members. In general, newcomers arrive with sets of expectations, experience a great deal of uncertainty, learn how things are done, how to adopt the appropriate organizational role, and which of their expectations are inaccurate. Eventually, they adapt themselves in order to adequately perform their organization roles by moving through a series of general stages. Although there is collectively some uncertainty regarding specific time frames, researchers have conducted studies purporting to measure specific socialization phases (Brown, 1985; Darling, 1986; Jablin, 1984). These models are helpful in understanding changes as a broad general phenomenon. They do not describe specific points of change.

The third trend addresses outcomes. Eventually, some newcomers become members. They become committed to, integrated into, or identified with the

organization (Buchanan, 1974; Feldman, 1976; Jablin, 1986; Van Maanan, 1976; Wilson, 1984). Organizational identification is frequently posited in models of socialization (Jablin, 1986; Kleinman, 1983).

Identification and Socialization

As Tompkins et al. (1975) originally pointed out, identification is one of several key terms in Kenneth Burke's grand theory of the social order. Burke used the terms hierarchy, order, mystery, and identification to describe the workings of the social order. He viewed formal organization as a special case within the broader social order. While hierarchy, order and mystery are associated with the underlying tendency toward segregation (Burke, 1973), identification is associated with the related tension in Burke's dialectic, the underlying tendency toward congregation. As Tompkins et al. (1975, p. 137) quote from Burke (1950, p. 115), "in mystery there must be strangeness, but the estranged must also be thought of as in some way capable of communion." In Burke's scheme, identification is a fundamental associational dimension along which change takes place as individuals strive to overcome division, or mystery (Cheney, 1983b).

Identification is both a process and a product (Cheney & Tompkins, 1987). While it is often treated as a product, or outcome of socialization (Jablin, 1986), we also conceptualize it as an ongoing process related to the mystery and division inherent in organization. Cheney (1982) conducted a thorough review of the literature and concluded that organizational identification as experienced by individuals is defined by feelings of similarity, belonging and membership. Individuals identify with collectives (in this case, graduate departments) to the extent that they feel similar to other members, they feel a sense of

belonging, and they consider themselves to be members. The extent to which individuals identify with various targets may change over time. Therefore, while identification may be treated as an outcome or product, researchers should remember that individuals' perceptions and feelings of identification may be expected to change over time. Identification, then, as a fundamental process of relational development and as a product involving feelings of similarity, belonging, and membership, is integrally related to the socialization process. These conceptualizations would predict that identification would increase in those newcomers who are successfully "transformed" into members during socialization. This relationship is explicit in many discussions of socialization (Jablin, 1986; Kleinman, 1983).

Much extant research (reviewed in Tompkins & Cheney, 1985) follows Cheney (1983b) in emphasizing the active role played by organizations in generating identification within individual members. Although identification is conceptualized as an active process on the part of individuals, it is typically not treated as such. Instead, organizational messages and practices create identifications.

Purpose

In socialization literature, participants' points of view on their socialization experiences have been slighted. Similarly, identification research has focused on organizational strategies more than individual experiences. Yet, both socialization and identification are processes in which individuals necessarily participate. Darling (1986) points out that research which is based on the assumption that individual intent and meanings are central to the process needs to incorporate methods which are consistent with that assumption.

Similarly, Cheney (1987a) emphasizes the need for researchers to understand the constraints which are self-imposed by the terms employed and relationships among terms which are implied. He advises researchers to listen to how contributors to organizations talk about their relationships with the organizations.

The purpose of this research is to examine participants' perspectives of change in the individual-organizational socialization relationship. In pursuing this research, we assume that: (1) Socialization is a process, (2) Identification is a fundamental dimension along which change occurs (Burke, 1973), (3) Participants' accounts of change need to be examined in order to understand their experiences, and (4) The method employed needs to be consistent with the goal of listening to participants as they define their change experiences.

Turning Point Analysis

We adopted turning point analysis for use in this study as a method for answering these concerns. Bolton (1961) first used the term to discuss patterns of change. Conceptualized as "any event or occurrence which is associated with change in a relationship," Baxter and Bullis (1986) defined turning points as "the substance of change." Several researchers have used turning point analysis in the study of change in developing romantic relationships. To examine rates of change in relationship progress (Huston, Surra, Fitzgerald & Cate, 1981), reasons given for relational changes (Lloyd & Cate, 1984; Surra, 1984), and stages of relational development (Braiker & Kelly, 1979). Baxter and Bullis (1986) used the turning point as a unit of analysis upon which to base a descriptive profile of the substance of change in the processes of relational development. After discovering that partners were able to describe a variety of events (including both internal and interaction-based, both specific and

general), they concluded that the turning point "potentially affords a rich understanding of relationship processes" and "has been underutilized to date by researchers." (Baxter & Bullis, 1986, p. 470).

The turning point is a valuable unit of analysis in organizational socialization research because turning point analysis: (1) does not assume that the socialization process follows a clear pattern of growth as do phase models and identification research, (2) allows a detailed examination of change points identified by participants rather than relying on researcher--generated definitions, (3) collects self reports in such a way that participants need not rely on their memories of events which occurred in the distant past, and (4) relies entirely on the reports of individuals who are actively involved in socialization processes to report their experiences rather than relying on the organization's perspective.

Research Questions

Five research questions were posed:

RQ1: What phenomena comprise socialization turning points in the perceptions of organizational newcomers?

RQ2: Do specific turning point events coincide with specific socialization phases?

RQ3: Do types of turning points differ in the degree to which they impact participants' experiences of immediate change in organizational identification?

RQ4: Is organizational identification (as outcome) associated with the presence or absence of specific types of turning points?

RQ5: Does organizational identification (as outcome) increase over time?

METHODS

Participants

Participants included 28 entering graduate students enrolled in Master's or doctoral degree programs in three communication departments. All students who entered the three departments were contacted during the first week of class, asked to participate in the study throughout the academic year, and agreed. Graduate students were used for two reasons. First, they typically enter an organization in numbers. As such, one may observe the development of an individual-organization relationship from the perspective of several newcomers within the same organization. Wanous (1980) asserts that it is much easier to observe how individuals "personalize" their socialization when they enter an organization in a group rather than individually. Second, the methods employed in this study have been previously developed and successfully employed with student populations.

Studies of graduate department socialization frequently focus on graduate departments as agents of professional role training (c.f. Pavalko & Holley, 1974; Rosen & Bates, 1967; Weiss, 1981). Outcomes of interest to these studies are related to the degree to which students gain professional role identities. These studies emphasize the unique role of graduate departments. Other studies emphasize the similarities between graduate departments and organizations in general. For example, Tompkins and Cheney (1983) studied a graduate department in their study of organizational identification. Darling (1986, 1988) studied graduate students in her study of organizational socialization. In this study, we adopt the latter view.

Initially 29 students agreed to participate. Due to participant mortality during the academic year, complete data were collected for only 28 students.

Approximately two-thirds (65%) of our sample were women. Twenty-three (82%) were enrolled in a Master's program and five (18%) were doctoral students. The mean age of the participants was 33.1 years.

Measures

The Retrospective Interview Technique (RIT) was used to acquire turning point data. This technique has been employed successfully in the study of romantic relationship turning points (Baxter & Bullis, 1986; Huston, et al., 1981; Lloyd, 1983; Lloyd & Cate, 1984). Miell (1984) argued for the validity of the technique after finding that people were highly accurate in recalling turning points. In another study, Stohl (1986) found that an overwhelming percentage of respondents were able to precisely recall a specific message which had a lasting influence on their life.

Researchers using the RIT ask individuals to identify and plot all the turning points in their relationships since first meeting their relational partners. Participants typically plot points on graphs with the (a) abscissas representing time in months from first meeting to the time of the interview and (b) the ordinates representing an index of relationship commitment. As each point is plotted, interviewers probe for additional information about the point. The graphs provide a tool through which interviewees are able to envision their entire relationship over time. Since they take on the role of filling in the graphs, they typically appear to become quite actively involved in creating a final graph which is the best possible representation of their relationship over time. The accounts may not be identical to the accounts which would result from an ongoing process during which participants monitored turning point experiences as they occur but should reflect their accounts of those experiences which occurred during a reasonable period of time preceding the interviews.

The RIT used in the present study was adapted and used to explore the individual-organization relationship. Two interviews were conducted with each participant: The first approximately 4 months after the beginning of the academic year (or two weeks into the second quarter) and the second approximately 4 months after the first, or 3 weeks prior to the end of the academic year. In discussing socialization stages as they relate to graduate student socialization, we follow Darling (1986) in her assumption that the first quarter may meaningfully be construed as an entry stage. We assume that the second and third quarters may meaningfully be construed as later stages. Newcomers have gained the experience of one meaningful unit. They have met people, and experienced one meaningful cycle (i.e., written papers, taken tests, registered, managed schedules, etc.), and begun further cycles. The four month intervals were also helpful in avoiding two extremes which have plagued previous research. In order to understand long term developmental processes from participants' perspectives, researchers frequently rely on interviews which require participants to describe change which occurred over many years (c.f. Kram, 1985). In these studies, results are suspect due to reliance on long term recall (Kram, 1985). At the other extreme is the tendency toward one-shot studies which suffer from adopting static models of relationships among variables (Jablin, 1984). By employing the RIT at four month intervals, we were able to avoid both extremes. Both interviews were identical and focused on turning points which occurred during the four months preceding the interview. Participants were introduced to the purpose of the study, the definitions of turning points and of identification, and were provided with assurances of confidentiality. Graphs, indicating monthly intervals on the ordinates and level of identification with the department on the abscissas, were then provided (Figure 1).

Participants first plotted and explained their identification levels at the time of the interviews and at the beginning of the preceding four-month period in order to provide anchor points by which to judge the intervening changes. They then proceeded to plot points in between when identification increased or decreased. As each point was identified and plotted, interviewers probed for details regarding the change in identification. Finally, the participants drew lines to indicate the nature of connections between the turning points and the points which immediately preceded. This procedure continued until all relevant points were identified. Participants were then instructed to look back over the entire graph and make any changes they considered appropriate.

Level of identification with the academic department was assessed with a shortened version of the Organizational Identification Questionnaire developed by Cheney (1983a). The twenty-five item OIQ has been used in a number of organizational studies (Bullis, 1984; Cheney, 1983a; Cox, 1983; Dionisopoulos & Samter, 1983) and was initially tested on a sample of communication graduate students which represented a population similar to that used in the present study. Internal reliability has been consistently reported to be 0.94 using Cronbach's alpha (Bullis, 1984; Cheney, 1983a). The alpha coefficient for the seventeen-item version was 0.90. The OIQ was filled out by participants during the second week of the academic year and again after eight months. Change in outcome identification was derived by subtracting the second score from the first.

Procedures

Interview notes were condensed into concise descriptions of turning point events for analysis. We then inductively derived a set of 15 turning point

types. Working independently, each researcher generated a set of turning point categories using the "clustering" technique described by Miles and Huberman (1984). Categories were then compared and collapsed into a single set. Both researchers independently coded all turning points into the categories. This resulted in an absolute agreement of 0.86. Reliability was computed using Cohen's (1960) kappa and found to be 0.85.

The OIQ scores were derived by summing the scores of the seventeen 7-point Likert Style questions and dividing the sum by seventeen.

Following Baxter and Bullis (1986), change in immediate identification was derived directly from participant graphs by subtracting the identification level at each turning point from the level indicated on the graph immediately preceding the change. This difference was then divided by the time (in months) over which the change occurred. Those points with an identification difference score greater than zero were positive turning points while those points with an identification difference score less than zero were negative turning points.

RESULTS

Question #1

The first research question asked for the identification of types of turning points experienced by individuals during the organizational socialization process. A total of 283 turning points were identified. Respondents reported a mean of 12.3 turning point events per account, while the number of turning points ranged from 4 to 18 per respondent. The turning point types with their respective frequencies and changes in identification levels are summarized in Table 1. They are described more fully here.

A. Moving In. Moving In refers to the establishment of a physical territory or space within the organization as well as becoming familiar with the surroundings in which the organization exists. Receiving the key to one's office, having a departmental mailbox or one's name on an office door all contributed to the establishment of a sense of place. Ownership of the environment or objects in the environment also characterized Moving In. One respondent claimed that, "_____ Hall is my department, my building," while another respondent noted that, "I chose my desk, which was important . . . my 'space' where I would be the next two years." Increased familiarity with the campus was also a factor in the establishment of "place" and an increase in identification.

B. Settling In. The process of Settling In occurred as one established a routine and became comfortable in his/her role as a graduate student. During the Settling In process one typically became aware of organizational expectations. Claims such as, "I had handled the role confusion. I was secure in my role," "I'm learning how you get along and what's going on," and "intellectually, I'm finding my niche" were typical of comments which reflected this process.

C. Socializing. Socializing involved informal discourse with graduate students or faculty external to the classroom. Socializing events were either (a) spontaneous or (b) events endorsed by a department for the primary purpose of informal communication. Spontaneous events were typically "pub runs," to a local tavern or sharing jokes, stories, gossip, and the like with professors and peers outside of class and in the privacy of one's office or "place." Departmentally-endorsed events included orientation picnics, a departmental Halloween party, a departmental progressive dinner, and a departmental softball game. Socializing promoted familiarity with other grads and faculty and

provided an outlet for graduate students to talk about themselves, their interests, and their professors.

D. Sense of Community. This turning point refers to an overall sense of identification with the department. Sense of Community was experienced as a cognitive or emotional state of organizational identification. Cognitive expressions of community were a product of individual perception--a "meshing" of self and organizational identities. Typical of the responses in this category were those that asserted, "School is who I am," or "I am a scholar and we are a community of scholars." One student captured the essence of community by stating, "What you spend time doing you begin to identify yourself with!"

An emotional Sense of Community was brought upon by the act of including oneself as well as being involved in the day-to-day non-identifiable interactions which led to this inclusion. Reports that the giving and receiving of social support, feeling connected to or cohesive with others in the department, and spending increased amounts of time in the department were common. One new student reflected upon new feelings of inclusion during orientation week, by stating that "during a conversation, Sue (a veteran) said 'we' instead of 'you' or 'I.' I felt like part of it all."

E. Receiving Informal Recognition. Any report of receiving positive feedback was coded as Receiving Informal Recognition. Recognition came from other peers or professors and was comprised of general, informal, positive comments. Receiving Informal Recognition from peers typically involved positive feedback about one's work. Recognition from a professor included positive feedback or feeling treated as an equal. Several respondents noted that "profs treat me as an equal rather than an undergrad," or "faculty treat us like people," or are "responsive to our concerns." Receiving Informal Recognition brought about the

greatest positive change in identification and was reported more frequently during conversations with professors than with other students.

F. Gaining Formal Recognition. In contrast to Receiving Informal Recognition, Gaining Formal Recognition consisted of receiving awards bestowed by the organization or receiving positive feedback for successfully completing organizational tasks. Gaining Formal Recognition involved the award of a scholarship, a grant, or teaching assistantship. The good grade received on a class assignment or the acceptance of a convention paper were also considered Gaining Formal Recognition. Finally, being asked to work for or with a professor on a project was a sign of Gaining Formal Recognition.

G. Jumping Informal Hurdles. Jumping Informal Hurdles resulted in a positive change in identification. Hurdles were perceived as internal roadblocks to the respondent's success as a graduate student. "Winning" or "Overcoming" these hurdles generally resulted in a sense of victory or a feeling that one would "make it despite the odds." One respondent explained "I felt like I had conquered a part of myself. I realized that I CAN do this [graduate school]. I am as strong as I need to be and I came through when I needed to," or "I saw the light at the end of the tunnel and felt a gradual improvement in my work."

H. Approaching Formal Hurdles. Unlike the Informal Hurdles, Formal Hurdles promoted either positive or negative identification. Formal Hurdles were described as "hoops" through which the student must jump to complete a graduate education. Formal Hurdles with positive outcomes often included the selection of one's chair and committee, the successful completion of class requirements (e.g., papers, tests, presentations, etc.) and the successful completion of the first quarter (as determined by the students' G.P.A.'s). A respondent's identification would decrease when the Formal Hurdle entailed some

difficulty or was not successfully completed. One student described his decrease in identification with the comment, "Writing the paper for this class was a time of heavy stress. The enormity of the assignment overwhelmed me. It told me I wasn't prepared."

I. Representing the Organization. Respondents often interacted in other campus departments or outside the academic community. A student expressed his establishment of a boundary role: "Taking a political science class made me feel good about being in communication. We had to do a group presentation and I was the leader for it--I did the introduction, the transitions, etc. I was the 'comm guy.' I could use all of my comm[unication] skills--people thought I was great without realizing why. It was my comm[unication] skills." Representing The Organization was also evident when the respondent was a teaching assistant, representing the department to undergraduate students.

J. Disappointment. Disappointment occurred when the organization or its members were less "perfect" than originally perceived. Examples of Disappointment included frustration with the content or teaching methods of a particular class. As one student reported, "The communication variables in this particular class weren't being met. At this time I began to think that the situation was not as rosy as I thought. I was getting really disgruntled with the course." Disappointment with professors typically involved a disagreement or conflict with a professor's behavior or research philosophy. The most common Disappointment, however, occurred when "the department" did not meet the student's expectations. The statement "I was the darling of my former department and had a lot of attention and feedback. Here it's zip. The faculty doesn't care," was similar to the sentiments expressed by several respondents. Another interviewee

stated, "I don't buy into the philosophy of this department--the course requirements and emphasis on papers at conventions."

K. Protecting One's "Self." Protecting One's "Self" involved behaviors enacted by respondents to avoid being "consumed" or "swallowed" by their involvement. The act of self protection was internal and was not triggered by a specific target.

In short, Protecting One's "Self" entailed a conscious move to disassociate so that one would not feel overburdened by departmental requirements or social contacts. Although there were only eight reports of Protecting One's "Self," they could be summed by one woman who said, "School is not my life. I'm not entrenched in the field or the department."

L. Getting Away. Getting Away was associated with the greatest decrease in organizational identification. Getting Away involved the association with a specific target external to the department. As respondents "got away," less physical and emotional time was spent in department-related activities. Getting Away included increased involvement with family, attending classes outside the department, and the development of personal relationships external to the department. Several respondents voiced the desire to "get away" from their respective departments to see if life existed outside.

M. Alienation. Alienation is the opposite of sense of community and was defined as a perceived lack of community or an internal feeling of difference between self and other in the department. Alienation always produced a loss of organizational identification. As one person reported, "I had no history that everyone else felt. I felt a sense of difference--an event that was significant to others was insignificant to me." Another person noted, "I didn't feel as if I fit in with the ages or the conversation. There were many people my age but they seemed more sophisticated."

N. Doubting Ones' "Self." Respondents who reported Doubting One's "Self" reported experiences which led them to question their competence as well as their ability to make a valuable contribution to the department. One person responded, "My loss of ID came from my questioning, 'I don't know if I can cut it in grad[uate] school!'" A second person stated, "I was doubting my competence and whether I was able to be a grad. My self-esteem was really down; I was doubting my sanity and was wondering if I had made the right choice to come here."

O. Miscellaneous. Turning points which did not fit into any of the above categories were coded as miscellaneous. Only six cases were coded into this category.

Question #2

The second research question asked whether specific types of turning points are associated with specific socialization phases. The total number of reported turning points differed across phases. Sixty-three percent occurred during the first-time period, and 37% occurred during the second time period ($X^2 = 8.76$, d.f. =1, $p<.005$). Chi square computations compared occurrences of each of 13 turning-point types between the first and second turning point interviews (two turning-point types, Moving In and Miscellaneous, were not analyzed due to low n's). Expected frequencies for each type were based on total proportions of turning points which occurred during the respective time periods.

Results indicate that the vast majority of types did not differ significantly in frequency of occurrence during the two different time periods. One type, Socializing, occurred significantly more often during the first time period ($X^2 = 4.15$, d.f. = 1, $p<.05$). Another type, Formal Recognition, occurred

more frequently than expected during the second time period (X^2 = 10.97, d.f. = 1, p<.005).

Question #3

The third research question was asked to determine whether different types of turning points were associated with different amounts of immediate change in identification. The mean immediate change in identification for each type is included in Table 1. A oneway ANOVA was computed which included turning point types with frequencies greater than 10 (3 categories were excluded). The ANOVA results suggest that the different types of turning points did differ significantly in their impact on immediate identification (F = 7.05, d.f. = 11; p.<.002). The Student Newmann-Kuels computations revealed two differences. First, Getting Away, and Alienation, which produced the two largest immediate drops in identification, were significantly different from the turning points which led to positive changes in identification (e.g., Settling In, Socializing, Sense of Community, Gaining Informal Recognition, Formal Recognition, Jumping Informal Hurdles, Approaching Formal Hurdles, Representing the Organization). Second, Receiving Informal Recognition was significantly different from all other turning points except Gaining Formal Recognition and Representing the Organization.

Question #4

The fourth research question explored the extent to which the level of outcome organizational identification after eight months was associated with the presence or absence of specific turning point types. A series of t-tests were computed comparing identification levels between participant accounts in which a given turning-point type was present with those in which the same turning-point type was absent.

OIQ scores differed significantly based on the presence or absence of two turning-point types. Participants who reported Socializing on at least one occasion reported higher levels of outcome identification than did participants whose accounts did not include any instances of Socializing ($T = 2.07$, d.f. = 22.30, $p<.05$). Participants who reported at least one instance of Disappointment reported lower outcome identification than did participants who did not ($T = 2.72$, d.f. = 15.78, $p<.015$).

Question #5

The difference between OIQ scores during the second week and after eight months were examined in order to determine whether organizational identification increased. The mean difference score was -0.242. The median score was -0.176. The difference scores ranged from -2.47 to 1.06. Ten difference scores were positive, reflecting increases. Eighteen difference scores were negative, reflecting decreases. The mean decrease in identification over the eight month period was not statistically significant.

DISCUSSION

This study identified turning points which new graduate students in three communication departments reported during their first academic year. Implications were derived by listening to participants' voices and examining them in the context of relevant theory.

The array of turning point types identified includes many which extend beyond the search for role-taking information. None emphasize overt information gathering about norms, values, the way things are done, etc. However, Moving In

and Settling In aid newcomers in their role-taking experiences. Socializing may well function as an opportunity for learning values and norms.

Several turning point types (Receiving Informal Recognition, Gaining Formal Recognition, Jumping Internal Hurdles, Approaching Formal Hurdles, and Doubting One's "Self") underscore the importance of evaluative information (Lester, 1986; Wilson, 1986). For example, Receiving Informal Recognition produced the greatest immediate change in organizational identification and was significantly different in this regard from most other turning point categories. These newcomers were most likely to experience immediate jumps in identification when they received unsolicited recognition. Lyman and Scott (1970) suggest that "stage-fright" occurs when newcomers experience apprehension about their competence. Unsolicited positive feedback greatly relieves newcomers' uncertainty. Of the two domains of uncertainty, evaluative and behavioral, discussed by Lester (1986), positive reduction of evaluative uncertainty may be more salient. These accounts emphasized the importance of positive relational information. Although quantitatively, more interaction may center around task information (Brown, 1985), these participants suggest that qualitatively, positive relational feedback is far more important to identification. These reports and the associated strong positive change in immediate identification may suggest that a kind of organizational confirmation is a critical turning point in the development of the organizational relationship. This confirmation may be as important in the newcomer's relationship with the organization as interpersonal confirmation is theorized to be in dyadic relationships (Buber, 1957; Cissna, 1976; Jablin, 1979; Watzlawick, Beavin & Jackson, 1967). Confirming responses acknowledge the agency of the human being. Interpersonal confirmation has been labeled <u>the</u> basic dimension (Cissna & Sieburg, 1979) of human communication. Graduate

students may have little interaction with the faculty (Darling, 1986), making confirmation difficult to obtain.

These participant accounts are consistent with the call of researchers for multiple levels of analysis (Cheney, 1987b; Jablin & Krone, 1987; Wilson, 1986) in the study of socialization. Some turning point types are centered in intra-individual experiences such as doubts or victories (c.f. Jumping Internal Hurdles, Doubting One's "Self," Sense of Community, and Alienation). Others depend on interactions with specific organizational members (Receiving Informal Recognition) while still others depend on the "organization" itself (Gaining Formal Recognition). Representing the Organization represents the salience of messages from the organizational environment to the socialization of members.

Many of these turning point types indicate that newcomers are actively involved in perceiving, evaluating, and managing their relationships with their respective organizations. They present an obvious divergence from the anthropological conception of primary socialization and support the distinction between primary and secondary socialization. Moreover, these newcomers were more likely to experience a decrease rather than an increase in identification over time. This calls into question the view of socialization in which newcomers are transformed into members. Newcomers may stay but not become identified with the organization. Specific experiences such as those described as Disappointment may lead to lower identification, and "unsuccessful" socialization. This may be as common or more common than "successful" socialization. This raises "contestable" issues regarding the "successful" outcomes of socialization, the desirability of such outcomes, and the practice of managing experiences of newcomers.

These accounts offer some solace to scholars who are concerned about the control of organizations over their members. Newcomers reported actively

protecting themselves from holistic inclusion as well as valuing socializing and settling in. They reported purposively getting away as well as jumping hurdles toward the organizations. They reported experiences of alienation as well as of community. More than half reported decreases in identification during their first year. This pattern is more consistent with Burke's dialectic than with organizational control. Newcomers described actively striving toward both identification and division.

Given the power of the terms we employ to guide our possibilities, our terms for individual-organizational relationships need to be carefully scrutinized. The term "assimilation" (Jablin, 1982) implies a more active role by embracing both "socialization" and "individualization." This term assumes that newcomers create and define their roles within the organization. We need to continue to seek terms that expand the individual's potential impact on creating and defining the organization itself. Current terms encourage us to reify the power of the organization at the expense of the individual. Terms which emphasize individuals as agents, adults rather than infants, engaging in coordinated action (Barnard, 1938) are needed. For example, Wilson (1984) recommended thinking of individual-organizational relationships like interpersonal relationships. This implies that participants determine the fate of the relationship rather than determining only their own individual roles within it.

The results of this study call for caution in adopting the assumptions of phase models of socialization. The frequency of reported turning points was higher during the first four months (or first academic quarter) than the second four month period. This is consistent with socialization models which assume that uncertainty is high during the early relationship. As a result, newcomers may attend more to all events. The high level of Socializing during the first

time period is consistent with past research (Jablin & Krone, 1987). The higher occurrence of Formal Recognition during the second time period suggests that this is an important memorable event. It also reflects temporal structure. The formal awards are simply not (typically) available earlier.

The more interesting result is the lack of pattern evident in the other eleven turning point types. Extant phase models would predict more consistency within time frames and less consistency between time frames. These reports indicate that the types of meaningful events which occur across time often may not respect developmental models. The occurrence of the negative turning point types early in the course of the relationship illustrates this. Stage models assume that the early period of relational development is a time of growth. Later, as the relationship decays, decline becomes more prevalent. These participants, however, articulated Getting Away and Alienation during the first academic year. These turning point types were significantly different from all others in the degree to which they were associated with immediate decreases in identification. In Getting Away, the individuals were actively involved in disassociating themselves from the organization. Identifications were redirected from the organization to different targets. Some of these events had to do with external targets which participants had de-emphasized for a period of time. Others occurred as a result of participants' active needs to get away from their intense involvements with their departments. Alienation was brought about by a perceived mismatch (Wanous, 1980) or lack of "fit" (Wilson, 1984) between the individual and the organization. If a newcomer perceived a difference between him/herself and others, identification decreased. Perceived mismatches typically manifested themselves as newcomers heard or observed organizational values, goals, collective experiences, etc.

Participants involved in these relationships did not experience a gradual growth in the relationship during the first eight months as phase models suggests, but rather a wider range of ups and downs. They are consistent with Baxter's (1988) recent reconceptualization of interpersonal relational development. In her critique of change phases, she posits change nodes which occur throughout the relationship as participants continually manage a variety of dialectic tensions. Similarly, these participants' descriptions of turning points describe an ongoing tension between movement toward identification, congregation, and the communion of similar beings on the one pole (c.f. Socializing, Sense of Community, Formal Recognition, Approaching Formal Hurdles, Representing the Organization) and movement toward division, mystery, and the segregation of estranged beings on the other (c.f. Doubting One's "Self," Getting Away, Alienation).

Although caution regarding phase models is warranted, the broad conceptualization of change they offer should not be supplanted by a detailed conceptualization which ignores broader patterns. Rather, comprehensive models which incorporate both are needed. Those events reported to have the greatest immediate impact on identification (Informal Recognition, Getting Away, and Alienation) are different from the events associated with level of identification as measured after eight months (Socializing and Disappointment). Researchers cannot assume that a detailed, fine-grained examination of change (such as turning points) yield a more specific description of change as depicted in broader stage models. Events which are experienced as strong turning points may recede in their importance over time while others have stronger longer term impacts. For example, Receiving Informal Recognition produced the greatest positive immediate change in identification, but was not associated with higher longer term identification.

In contrast, newcomers who reported Socializing on at least one occasion reported higher levels of identification after eight months than did participants who did not. Yet they did not report Socializing events among those which created the highest immediate changes in identification. These results are consistent with previous research which found that newcomers typically emphasize social relationships (Feldman & Brett, 1983; Katz, 1980). Socializing may serve as a means of holistic inclusion (Ouchi, 1980), directly enhancing the degree to which participants' identities merge with the organization.

Similarly, newcomers who reported at least one instance of Disappointment reported lower levels of identification after eight months than those who did not. Newcomers may assume a certain level of identification (Simon, 1976). This identification may be based on inflated, unrealistic expectations (Jablin, 1986; Wanous, 1980). Unmet expectations then function as catalysts for decreases in identification. Disappointment appears to create a decrease in identification from which the relationship does not recover.

These results do not support the contention that time leads to stronger identification as newcomers are transformed to insiders. More OIQ scores decreased than increased. The detailed analysis used here helped to explain this pattern of change in outcome identification.

Turning point analysis using the RIT appears to be a viable method for examining a variety of issues associated with change in the individual-organization relationship. It was used here to listen to participants' voices recalling salient events over time. It proved to be more valuable than we had anticipated. In other words, we assumed that turning points were specific events which occur at specific temporal moments. These participants articulated internal experiences and general periods of change in evolving patterns of behavior

unmarked by specific memorable events. The method did not preclude participants' voices from telling their experiences when their experiences did not fit with our expectations.

Researchers may address a host of specific questions through turning point analysis. For example, further research should investigate the generalizability of these findings. These particular accounts may be unique to these participants. Future research should extend over a longer time period, identify pre-entry turning points, and identify common trajectories of sequential turning points. This should involve a more continuous monitoring of participants to gather accounts of the time turning points occur. The roles of holistic inclusion, organizational confirmation, relational level uncertainty, and realistic expectations in the development of organizational identification posited here need to be explored. Clusters of specific types of turning points may be indicators of unique cultures or subcultures.

Research needs to incorporate organizational and individual perspectives and contextual constraints. Individual experiences should be examined for their associations with various organizational socialization practices and outcomes. The issue of individual agency should be probed.

These findings call for further examination of the identification-division tension identified here. Strategies members and "organizations" (supervisors, policies, practices) use in managing this tension, communicative situations in which it surfaces, and impacts of strategies over time should be probed. Models of change which incorporate both immediate change and long-term change are needed.

FIGURE 1.

RIT GRAPH

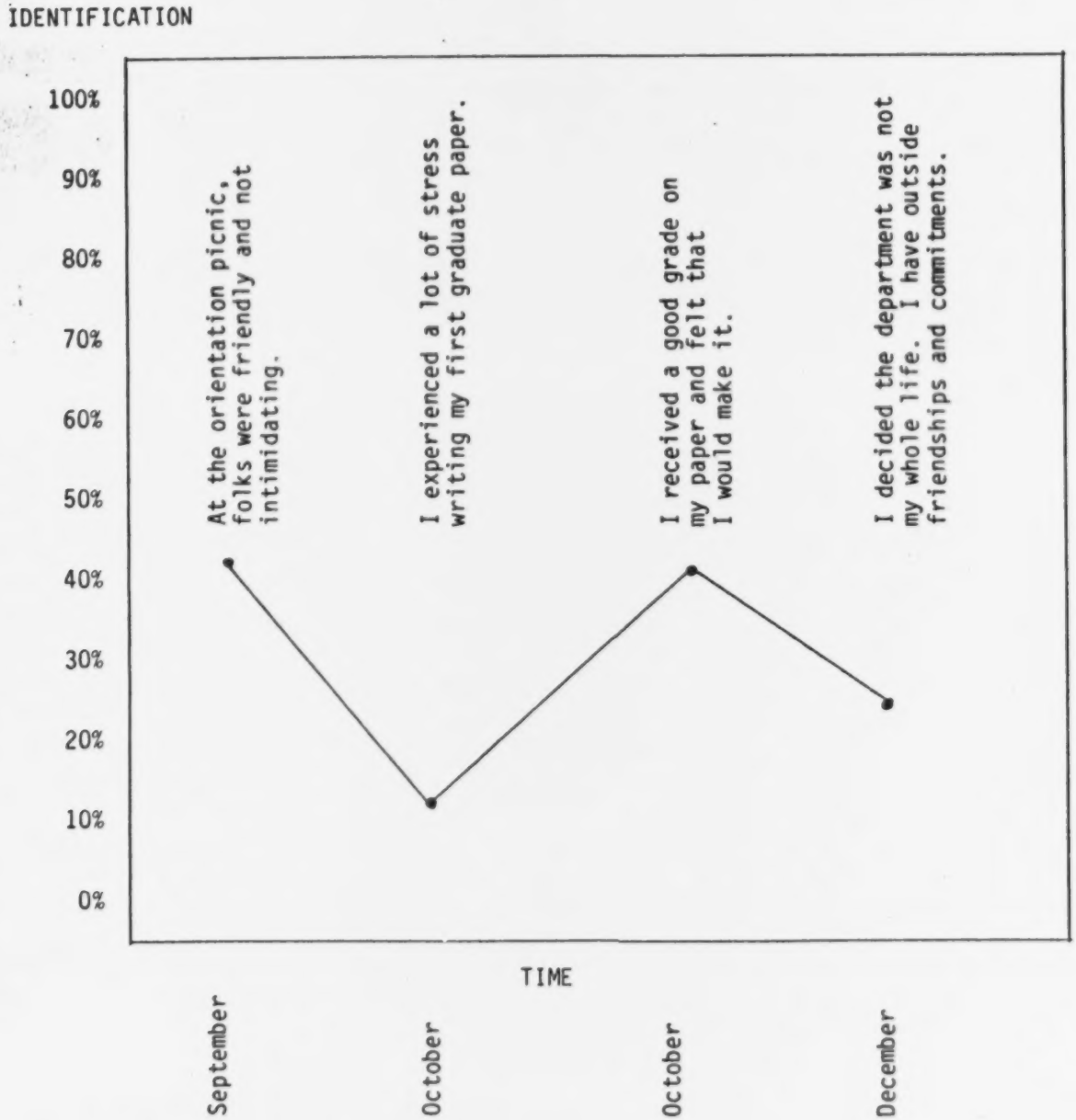

Table 1.

Turning Point Categories and Levels of Change

Turning Point	Frequency	%	Mean Change in Identification by Month
Moving In	4	1.4	( )
Settling In	20	7.1	10.44
Socializing	23	8.1	56.49
Sense of Community	50	17.7	29.16
Receiving Informal Recognition	21	7.4	114.82
Gaining Formal Recognition	20	7.1	51.58
Jumping Informal Hurdle	19	6.7	24.76
Approaching Formal Hurdle	34	12.0	28.41
Representing the Organization	11	3.9	50.89
Disappointment	21	7.4	-21.24
Protecting One's "Self"	8	2.8	( )
Doubting One's "Self"	15	5.3	-15.25
Getting Away	15	5.3	-88.08
Alienation	16	2.1	-78.96
Miscellaneous	6	2.1	( )
	283		

REFERENCES

Barnard, C. (1938). The functions of the executive. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Baxter, L. (1988). Dialectical perspective on communication strategies in relational development. In S. Duck (Ed.) Handbook of Personal Relationships, (pp. 257-273). New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Baxter, L., & Bullis, C. (1986). Turning points in developing romantic relationships. Human Communication Research, 12, 469-494.

Bolton, C. D. (1961). Mate selection as the development of a relationship. Marriage and Family Living, 23, 234-240.

Braiker, H. B., & Kelley, H. H. (1979). Conflict in the development of close relationships. In R. L. Burgess and T. L. Huston (Eds.), Social exhange in developing relationships (pp. 135-168). New York: Academic Press.

Brim, O. G., Jr. (1966). Socialization through the life cycle. In O. G. Brim, Jr. and S. Wheeler (Eds.), Socialization after childhood: Two essays (pp. 1-49). New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Brown, M. H. (1985). That reminds me of a story: Speech action in organizational socialization. Western Journal of Speech Communication, 49, 17-42.

Buber, M. (1957). Distance and relation. Psychiatry, 20, 97-104.

Buchanan, B. (1974). Building organizational commitment: The socialization of managers in work organization. Administrative Science Quarterly, 19, 533-546.

Bullis, C. (1984). The forest ranger revisited. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Purdue University.

Burke, K. (1950). A rhetoric of motives. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Burke, K. (1973). The rhetorical situation. In L. Thayer (ed.), Ethical and moral issues (pp. 263-275). London: Gordon and Breach.

Cheney, G. (1982). Organizational identification as process and product: A field study. Unpublished master's thesis, Purdue University.

Cheney, G. (1983a). On the various and changing meanings of organizational membership: A field study of organizational identification. Communication Monographs, 50, 342-362.

Cheney, G. (1983b). The rhetoric of identification and the study of interpersonal communication. Quarterly Journal of Speech, 69, 143-158.

Cheney, G. (1987a, November). On identity, organization, and transcending levels of analysis in communication research. Paper presented at the meeting of the Speech Communication Association, Boston.

Cheney, G. (1987b, November). A rhetorical-critical look at the processes of organizational socialization. Paper presented at the meeting of the Speech Communication Association, Boston.

Cissna, K. (1976). Interpersonal confirmation: A review of current theory, measurement, and research. Saint Louis: Saint Louis University, (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. Ed 126 544).

Cissna, K., & Sieburg, E. (1979). Interactional foundations of interpersonal confirmation. Paper presented at the International Communication Association and Speech Communication Association Postdoctoral Conference, "Human Communication from the Interactional View," Asilomar, California.

Cohen, J. (1960). A coefficient of agreement for nominal scales. Educational and Psychological Measurement, 20, 27-46.

Cox, M. (1983). The effectiveness of Black identification and organizational identification on communication supportiveness. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Purdue University.

Darling, A.L. (1986, November). On becoming a graduate student: An examination of communication in the socialization process. Paper presented at the meeting of the Speech Communication Association, Chicago.

Darling, A.L. (1988). Graduate student socialization: Categories of encounters. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Communication Association, New Orleans.

Dionisopolous, G., & Samter, W. (1983). Identification by antithesis: An analysis of the "us versus them" orientation by police. Paper presented at the meeting of the Eastern Communication Association, Ocean City, MD.

Falcione, R. L., & Wilson, C. E. (1988). Socialization processes in organizations. In Goldhaber, G. and Barnett, G. (Eds.), Handbook of organizational communication. New York: Ablex.

Feldman, D. C. (1988). Managing careers in organizations. Glenview, IL: Scott Foresman & Company.

Feldman, D. C. (1976). A contingency theory of socialization. Administrative Science Quarterly, 21, 433-452.

Feldman, D.C., and Brett, J.M. (1983). Coping with new jobs: A comparative study of new hires and job changers. Academy of Management Journal, 26, 257-272.

Huston, T. L., Surra, C., Fitzgerald, N. M., & Cate, R. (1981). From courtship to marriage: Mate selection as an interpersonal process. In S. Duck and R. Gilmour (Eds.), Personal relationships 2: Developing personal relationships (pp. 53-88). London and New York: Academic Press.

Jablin, F. M. (1987). Organizational entry, assimilation, and exit. In Jablin, F. M., Putnam, L. L., Roberts, K. H., & Porter, L. W. (Eds.), Handbook of organizational communication (pp. 679-740). Beverly Hills: Sage.

Jablin, F. (1986, May). What is organizational assimilation? An overview of communication, socialization and individualization processes. In L. Putnam (Chair), Communication and organizational socialization. Preconference conducted at the meeting of the International Communication Association, Chicago.

Jablin, F. (1984). Assimilating new members into organizations. In R. Bostrom (Ed.), Communication Yearbook, 8 (pp. 594-626). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Jablin, F. (1982). Organizational communication: An assimilation approach. In M. E. Roloff & C. R. Berger (Eds.), Social cognition and communication (pp. 255-286). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Jablin, F. (1979). Superior-subordinate communication: The state of the art. Psychological Bulletin, 86, 1201-1222.

Jablin, F. M., & Krone, K. J. (1987). Organizational assimilation. In Berger, C. R., & Chaffee (Eds.), Handbook of communication science (pp. 711-796). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Katz, R. (1980). Time and work: Toward an integrative perspective. In B. M. Staw & L. L. Cummings (Eds.), Research in Organizational Behavior, 2 (pp. 81-127). Greenwich, CT: JAL Press.

Kleinman, S. (1983). Collective matters as individual concerns: Peer culture among graduate students. Urban Life, 12, 203-225.

Kram, K. E. (1985). Mentoring at work: Developmental relationships in organizational life. Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman & Co.

Kreps, G. L. (1983). Using interpretive research: The development of a socialization program at RCA (pp. 243-256). In Putnam, L. L., & Pacanowsky, M. E. (Eds.), Communication and organizations: An interpretive approach. Beverly Hills: Sage.

Lester, R. E. (1986). Organizational culture, uncertainty reduction and the socialization of new organizational members. In G. Thomas (Ed.), Culture and communication--Methodology, behavior, artifacts, and institutions (pp. 105-113). Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Lloyd, S. (1983). A typological description of premarital relationship dissolution. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Oregon State University.

Lloyd, S., and Cate, R. (1984). Attributions associated with significant turning points in premarital relationship development and dissolution. Paper presented at the Second International Conference on Personal Relationships, Madison, WI.

Louis, M. R. (1980). Surprise and sense making: What newcomers experience in entering unfamiliar organizational settings. Administrative Science Quarterly, 25, 226-251.

Lyman, L. M., & Scott, M. B. (1970). A sociology of the absurd. New York: Meredith.

Miell, D. (1984). Strategies in information exchange in developing relationships: Evidence for a unique relational context. Paper presented at the Second International Conference on Personal Relationships, Madison, WI.

Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1984). Qualitative data analysis: A Sourcebook of new methods. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Ouchi, W. G. (1981). Theory Z. Redding, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Pavalko, R.M., & Holley, J.W. (1974). Determinants of professional self-concept among graduate students. Social Science Quarterly, 55, 462-477.

Reichers, A. E. (1987). An interactionist perspective on newcomer socialization raters. Academy of Management Review, 12, 278-287.

Rosen, B.C., & Bates, A.D. (1967). The structure of socialization in graduate school. Sociological Inquiry, 37, 71-84.

Schein, E. H. (1971). The individual, the organization, and the career: A conceptual scheme. Journal of Applied Behavioral Science, 7, 401-426.

Simon, H. (1976). Administrative behavior (3rd ed.). New York: Academic Press.

Stohl, C. (1986). The role of memorable messages in the process of organizational socialization. Communication Quarterly, 34, 231-249.

Surra, C. (1984). Attributions about changes in commitment: Variations by courtship style. Paper presented at the Second International Conference on Personal Relationships, Madison, WI.

Tompkins, P., & Cheney, G. (1985). Communication and unobtrusive control in contemporary organizations. In R. McPhee and P. Tompkins (Eds.), Organizational communication: Traditional themes and new directions (pp. 179-210). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Tompkins, P. K., Fisher, J. Y., Infante, D. A., & Tompkins, E. L. (1975). Kenneth Burke and the inherent characteristics of formal organizations: A field study. Speech Monographs, 42, 135-142.

Van Maanen, J. (1975). Police socialization: A longitudinal examination of job attitudes in an urban police department. Administrative Science Quarterly, 20, 207-228.

Van Maanen, J. (1976). Breaking in: Socialization to work. In R. Dubin (Ed.), Handbook of work, organization and society (pp. 67-120). Chicago: Rand McNally.

Wanous, J. (1980). Organizational entry: Recruitment, selection, and socialization of newcomers. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Watzlawick, P., Beavin, J., & Jackson, D. (1967). Pragmatics of human communication. New York: W. W. Norton.

Weiss, C. S. (1981). The development of professional role commitment among graduate students. Human Relations, 34, 13-31.

Wilson, C. E. (1984, May). A communication perspective on socialization in organizations. Paper presented at the meeting of the International Communication Association, San Francisco.

Wilson, C. E. (1986, November). Organizational socialization, uncertainty reduction and communication networks. Paper presented at the meeting of the Speech Communication Association, Chicago.